Black Rail *(Laterallus jamaicensis)*

(includes 4 subspecies; 2 within plan area)

Conservation Concern Category:
Highest Concern

Population Trend (PT)

L. jamaicensis jamaicensis – Declining (Delany and Scott 2002: Birdlife International 2000)
L. jamaicensis coturniculus – Declining (Delany and Scott 2002; Eddleman et al. 1994)

"breeding range of Eastern Black Rail has contracted since early 1930s…California Black Rail nearly eliminated as a breeding species south of Morrow Bay, California…coastal populations probably declined drastically between 1920s and 1970s…populations have qualitatively declined on east coast and have declined drastically in Midwest…lower Colorado River population declined estimated 30% from 1973-1989…" (Eddleman et al. 1994)

"in the US, most populations have probably declined drastically this century, and the breeding range has contracted seriously…in coastal California coturniculus has almost been eliminated as a breeding species s of Morro Bay, and most birds occur in San Francisco Bay, but a small population was discovered inland as recently as 1994…the lower Colorado River population declined about 30% from 1973-1989…in Puerto Rico, where it was once a breeding resident but was probably extiropated by the introduced mongoose…the situation in Jamaica is apparently similar…" (Taylor 1998)

"In the Pacific Coast of Baja California, there are remnant populations in San Quintín and San Telmo, with no population estimates, but very few records. I think that *coturniculus* is very rare now in this region. Ornithological expeditions to the region in the early 1900's mentioned that Black Rails were common in these wetlands (Bent 1926, Huey 1926, Grinnell 1928), thus suggesting a drastic decline of the population…" (O. Hinojosa-Huerta, pers.comm.)

PT FACTOR SCORE=5

Population Size (PS)

L. jamaicensis jamaicensis – 25,000-100,000 total individuals (Delany and Scott 2002: Denver workshop)
L. jamaicensis coturniculus – <10,000 total individuals (Delany and Scott 2002: Eddleman et al. 1994; [N San Francisco Bay-3,204-8,905 (Eddleman et al. 1994); lower Colorado R-100-200 calling males (Evens et al. 1991)])

"*coturniculus* breeds in the Colorado River delta (Ciénega de Santa Clara and El Doctor wetlands in the state of Sonora, and Andrade Mesa Wetlands in Baja California), with an estimated population of 50-75 pairs. We don't know the trend of the populations in the Colorado delta, as the subspecies was first detected in this region in 1998…" (O. Hinojosa-Huerta, pers.comm.)

"estimated densities: 1.14 rails/ha (1973) and 1.58 rails/ha (1974) on lower Colorado River…" (Eddleman et al. 1994)

"present all year in Costa Rica, where it is possibly widespread but overlooked…" (Taylor 1998)

PS FACTOR SCORE=2-3

Threats to Breeding Populations (TB)

"massive loss of habitat associated with historic and ongoing pressure of agriculture, salt production, and urbanization has drastically reduced Black Rail populations in w US…selenium levels were elevated in livers and eggs…spraying of marshes for insect control has unknown effect on rails and their prey…loss and degradation of suitable wetland habitat pose greatest threats…ditching of salt marshes…alteration of water regimes that encourages invasive plants…burning of marshes…susceptible to disturbance such as grazing and agriculture…contamination of wetlands by toxic agents…lining of irrigation canals…" (Eddleman et al. 1994)

"California population threatened by marsh subsidence caused by groundwater removal, diking of saltmarshes, water level fluctuation, and by wildfires…more susceptible than many rails to disturbance from grazing and agriculture…continued massive degradation and loss of shallow wetland habitats gives cause for greater concern in the future…avian predators include herons owls, gulls, harriers…" (Taylor 1998)

"fire ant predation may be a threat to breeding…" (Legare and Eddleman 2001)

TB FACTOR SCORE=5

Threats to Non-breeding Populations (TN)

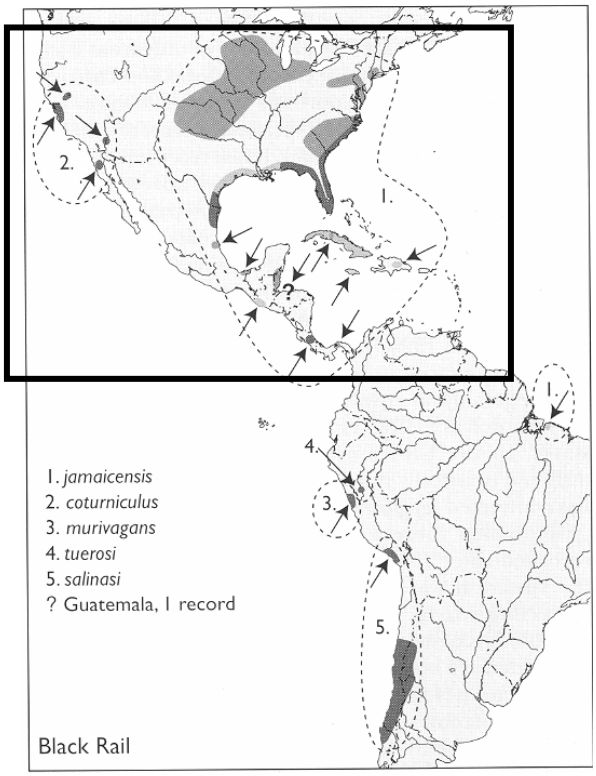
"sometimes strikes TV towers and buildings during fall migration and juvenile dispersal…" (Eddleman et al. 1994)

"herons may eat large numbers of adults during extremely high tides if adequate cover is unavailable…domestic cats also predators…" (Taylor 1998)

"large scale marsh burning may locally impact the non-breeding populations…" (M. Legare, pers.comm.)

TN FACTOR SCORE=4

Global Range (Taylor 1998; inset=plan area range)



Breeding Distribution (BD)

L. jamaicensis jamaicensis – E & C USA, E Central America (Delany and Scott 2002)

L. jamaicensis coturniculus – Arizona, California & Baja California, C Sierra Nevada; most now along N San Francisco Bay (Delany and Scott 2002);

1,121,800 km^2 (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

BD FACTOR SCORE=4

Non-breeding Distribution (ND)

L. jamaicensis jamaicensis – S USA to Costa Rica & Greater Antilles (Delany and Scott 2002)

L. jamaicensis coturniculus –

1,384,000 km^2 (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

ND FACTOR SCORE=4

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